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Congressman Bob Goodlatte
Sixth District of Virginia

RECEIVED

JUN - 8 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Fax

OET BPL 1520

04-37

To:	Ms. Diane Atkinson, Congressional Liaison Specialist, Federal Communications Commission	**From:**	Pete Larkin, District Director Congressman Bob Goodlatte
Fax:	202-418-2866 1662	**Pages:**	3
Phone:	202-418-1911	**Date:**	05/06/2004
Re:	Constituent Inquiry	**CC:**	

Urgent **X For Review** **☐ Please Comment** **X Please Reply** **☐ Please Recycle**

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May 6, 2004

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Ms. Diane J. Atkinson
Congressional Liaison Specialist
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Room 8-C453
Washington, D.C. 20554

VIA FAX
(202)418-2806

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

Attached please find a letter that I have received from my constituent, David Jones, regarding his concerns about the dangers in distributing broadband via power lines.

I would appreciate you looking into this matter and providing me with a response for my constituent. Please mail your response to my Roanoke office at the address marked below.

Thank you for your assistance.

With kind regards.

Very truly yours,

Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

RVG:pl

Attachment

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27 April 2004

APR 29 2004

Rep.Bob Goodlatte

1? Franklin Road, SW Suite 540
Roanoke, VA 24011

Dear Bob:

Yesterday, April 26, President Bush told the American Association of Community Colleges Annual Convention in Minneapolis: "There needs to be technical standards to make possible new broadband technologies, such as the use of high-speed communication directly over power lines. Power lines were for electricity; power lines can be used for broadband technology. So the technical standards need to be changed to encourage that."

Unfortunately, Mr. Bush has been misinformed. Using power lines to distribute broadband services (called Broadband over Power Lines, or BPL) is a potentially dangerous idea that should be discouraged. As a federally licensed Amateur Radio operator who has passed several Federal Communications Commission (FCC) examinations in radiocommunication technology; let me tell why.

Power lines were designed to transmit electrical energy. They were not designed to transmit broadband signals, which in fact are radio-frequency (RF) signals. When a broadband signal is put on a power line, the line acts like an antenna and much of the RF energy leaks off the line and radiates. This causes interference to nearby radio receivers. Interference has been and continues to be documented at test sites across the country and overseas where BPL is in testing. Recordings of actual interference at several test sites can be listened to over the internet at **www.arrl.org/bpl**.

The nation's 680,000 radio amateurs, along with our 1,000 plus licensed operators here in the Roanoke Valley, are especially concerned about this interference. It affects the short waves -- a unique portion of the radio spectrum that supports long-distance, intercontinental radio communication. Licensed radio amateurs use these frequencies for hurricane reporting, disaster and emergency relief, and many other purposes in accordance with FCC regulations. Here in Roanoke, these very frequencies have been used by hams to support emergency communications during the floods and several other smaller events in the recent past. At times, we were the only reliable communications link to the Richmond EOC. The Amateur Radio Service is the only 100% failsafe emergency communications capability in the world and is recognized by FEMA for these abilities. No matter what happens, radio amateurs will be able to communicate with one another without relying on expensive and vulnerable infrastructure -- but we cannot maintain our emergency networks if BPL is deployed and interferes with the very radio signals we are trying to hear. Or worse yet, prevents others from hearing us when there is an emergency in Roanoke.

In addition to amateur radio operation, the short wave bands are used for international broadcasting, aeronautical, maritime, and other services including the military. Depending on the frequencies in use, BPL interference could wipe out radio communication for many of our nation's First Responders -- police, fire, and emergency medical personnel -- who use low-band VHF

radios operating in the 30-50 megahertz (MHz) range, including some of our surrounding localities.

Radio amateurs support expanded broadband services to consumers at lower cost. Indeed, we tend to be early adopters and sometimes developers of new technology. However, there are ways to deliver broadband that do not pollute the radio spectrum as BPL does. These include fiber-to-the-home, cable, DSL, and Broadband Wireless Access. None of these technologies cause interference to radio.

BPL is sometimes touted as a solution for rural areas. It is not. A BPL signal can only travel a few thousand feet down a power line and then must be repeated by a separate receiver and transmitter. This requires a lot of hardware every couple of poles and will not be economic in areas with low population densities. And just the potential cost from summer lightning damage in our local area..

The FCC recognizes the interference potential of BPL and is in the midst of a rulemaking proceeding, ET Docket No. 04-37, that proposes new requirements and measurement guidelines for BPL systems. However, the FCC proposals do not go nearly far enough to protect over-the-air radio communication services. At this stage, they seem to support the BPL offender at the expense of the legal users of the radio spectrum.

In short, BPL has a major disadvantage not shared by the other broadband technologies and that outweighs whatever benefit it may offer. National broadband telecommunications policy should not include support for BPL, but should focus on other, more appropriate and cost effective technologies.

By encouraging broadband over power lines, the administration is heading in the technologically wrong direction. Please help us to change its course. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David R. Jones, Jr. AIA

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